

ANOTHER NEW SPECIES OF *MORDELLISTENA* COSTA
(COL.: MORDELLIDAE) IN BRITAIN

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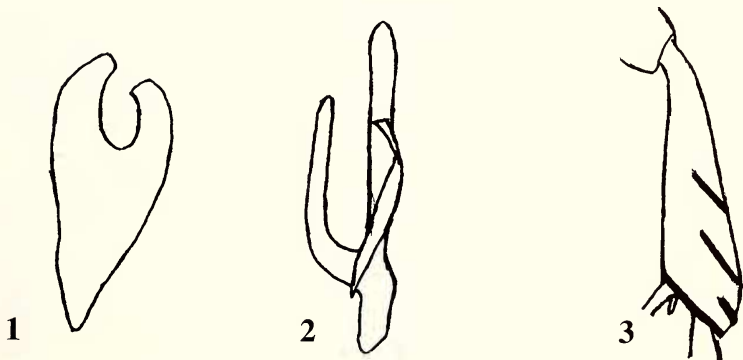
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Mordellistena eludens sp. n.

A SMALL SPECIES of the group of *M. parvula* Gyll. Body black, pubescence short, close, shining yellowish-ashy. Front of head, mouthparts, first four segments of antennae, apical segment of maxillary palpi, and anterior femora, brownish-testaceous; rest of palpi clearer testaceous, of the form normal for the group. Antennae stouter than in the male of *M. parvula* and with apical segment more elongate, longer than the preceding. Hinder half of pronotal side-margins only slightly sinuate in lateral view; hind angles, from above, more than 90° but sharp. Elytra, legs, and pygidial spine normal for the group; accessory spur of hind tibia very short and small. Outer face of hind tibia with two not quite parallel ridges besides the small subapical one (Fig.3), appearing as usual a little different in different lights. Male parameres characteristic (Figs. 1, 2). Length 3mm or rather less.

Holotype male in the captor's collection.

This species is mainly to be known by the distinctive parameres of the male genitalia; the female, unknown as yet, may well be difficult to separate from females of allied species. Adopting the orientation of Ermisch's (1969) figures: the ventral (or inferior) branch of the right arm of the right paramere is remarkably elongate, being much longer than the left arm, somewhat as in *M. falsoparvula* Erm.; it also reaches far beyond the apex of the dorsal (superior) branch – not the case in the last-named, which further has a quite different left paramere. The right one may be likened also to that of *M. bicoloripilosa* Erm., but there the left one, again is quite different. These points taken together will readily distinguish *M. eludens*, in the male sex, from all mid-European species dealt with in the above work.



Figures 1-3: *Mordellistena eludens* sp.n.

1. left paramere; 2. right paramere; 3. outer face of right hind tibia.

The unique specimen was taken by general sweeping on open flowery ground on Mount Caburn, a chalk hill two miles south-east of Lewes in East Sussex, on 19.vi.1993, by Mr R.A. Jones, and submitted to me. Much effort by him and Mr P. J. Hodge at and near the spot has so far failed to yield further material – whence the name I have chosen. Attempts to contact the *Mordellistena* specialist in Prague, Dr Jan Horák, in connection with this insect, have unfortunately met with no success.

The occurrence of yet another member of this genus in England should not occasion great surprise. I know of a further species, likewise apparently unique as British, not yet published.

Reference

- Ermisch, K., 1969. In Freude, H., Harde, K.W. & Lohse, G.A., *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*: 175,177.
Goecke & Evers, Krefeld.
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Some observations on pigment stability in the wing markings of *Graphium weiskei* (Ribbe) (Lep.: Papilionidae)

Hanging in a display case on my wall are two specimens of *Graphium weiskei*, both taken by myself in Chimbu Province, Papua New Guinea in 1976. Originally these were easily discernible as being of two varieties; one normal and the other having the pink colour of the sub-basal patch replaced by pale-blue. Both of these varieties are illustrated in Parsons (1999. *The Butterflies of Papua New Guinea: Their systematics and biology*. Academic Press, London). Now they are indistinguishable from each other as, over a period of about ten years, the blue in the one and the mauve in the other have oxidised to bright pink so that only two colours remain in the wing spots and sub-basal patch – green and pink.

Haugum and Samson (1981. Notes on *Graphium weiskei*. Lepid. Gp. of 1968 Newsl, (Suppl.) 1-12) postulated that the colour forms of *G. weiskei* probably resulted from the “degree of photochemical oxidation (or similar influencing factors affecting the live insect)”. There now would appear to be three main objections to that hypothesis, namely:

- a) Colour varieties are already apparent in fresh imagines (Parsons *loc. cit.*)
- b) Colour changes require a long time to occur photochemically, (albeit in dead *G. weiskei*)
- c) such a mechanism would appear to require blue to be the original colour of the pigment on emergence and would, in the case of the two varieties considered here, make the blue form much more common than indeed it is. (I have estimated its frequency in the wild to be in the order of 0.001.)

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